837 36 584 Through her marriage Kuvé's family gained Vomblé as an ally in the quest for food. Even before marriage a girl's sexual interests are beneficial [43] to her family, for her lovers come with presents of food, and they are welcome at her parents' fireside. The food a lover brings is not payment for favors he has received but a gift in expectation of favors still to come. Even after her marriage a woman's amorous intrigues are of considerable advantage to those around her—even to her own husband, for every time she attracts a man she has added a hunter to the band. Wherever his mistress is, there the lover stays, and unless her husband gets wind of the affair and flies into a rage the lover may very likely follow the camp almost indefinitely. His presence is welcome, of course, for another gun or bow and another knife and axe mean so much more meat and honey. Thus even adultery plays a constructive role in Kaingáng society, for it keeps within the band men who might otherwise go elsewhere in search of satisfaction, and it often culminated in polyandrous marriage, which has been one of the strongest integrating forces in Kaingáng society.

595 582 The story is told of Kuvén who was the lover of both Kanggá and her mother. Now as Kanggá's father grew old and it became difficult for him to get meat, he felt more and more the necessity of having someone to help him hunt for his large family. As long as Kuvén remained he could depend on him, but when it seemed that the young man was becoming interested in Yemái, a woman who was no relative of his and whom, therefore, Kuvén might follow far away to her relatives, Kanggá's father said to his wife and daughter: "Call Kuvén; if he marries Yemái he will leave me and go away. Let him get food for your children when I die. If he marries another woman he will throw your children away." So Kanggá's mother called Kuvén and said to her daughter: "Marry him. I am going to live with you and him." So Kuvén married both mother and daughter, and when Kanggá's father died Kuvén took care of the latter's children.

621 671 The Kaingáng have no system of clans or moieties[1] to impose social obligations on them. Their kinship system is not the crystallization of inescapable obligations that is found in many other primitive societies but prin- [61] cipally a device for grouping people in large age classes. Their mode of life also made the maintenance of complex systems of obligations and loyalties extremely difficult, for they wandered from place to place in little groups of two to twenty adults. Even the biological family had little permanence as a cooperating unit, for children wandered away from their parents when [594] they grew up and brothers separated to go with their in-laws or to travel with childhood playmates and hunting companions in search of adventure. Under the influence of the conflicting obligations of blood and marriage the composition of the small group of adults was forever changing. The dependence of the men on one another, and even their fundamental reali-

[1] See Appendix II, p. 175.

2: Henry E-5 (1932-1934) 1941
SM3 Caingang SM3
Aweikoma

zation of this dependence, is not enough to stabilize any relationship among them even today, for there are any number of men with whom an individual may join forces, and if he hunts with his father today he may go away with his wife's father tomorrow and with his sister's husband the day after. Nothing compels him to fix his allegiance.

Nevertheless the Kaingáng had achieved a certain degree of social cohesion, and one of the ways in which they managed it was by building permanent cooperating units around their sex interests. It is in this way that social integration, although explicitly expressed in terms of the economically important men, often actually revolved about the women. As in the case of Kanggá and her mother, the women often became the nuclei of polyandrous and also of joint marriages, which often changed their male composition frequently. Thus by her mere existence the woman held together a complex household, which disintegrated when she died. A general lack of formal rules for marriage permitted the easy building up of large *ménages* by gradual additions of men and women. A household might begin with either a monogamous or a polygynous marriage; as time passed another man might be added to the household and become the co-husband; perhaps another wife was added and then another man. Through the years the family would expand and contract or simply change as the wives or husbands died or were killed off in feuds or the raids of the bugreiros.

The Indians told me of the marriages of Wanyekí.[2] Together with his wife Tendó, his sister and his hunting companion Chu, he wandered about, far away from other members of the tribe. This was nothing unusual for the Kaingáng, who sometimes did not see one another for years. When Chu's wife died Wanyekí's wife cooked and made a sleeping-place for him, simply, as the Kaingáng put it, "because he had no wife," and he became her co-husband. So Chu was saved for Wanyekí and his little isolated band and did not wander away in search of another wife. But as time passed Tendó, the wife, died, and Wanyekí and Chu were left alone. Until his nieces, his sister's daughters, grew to adolescence, Wanyekí had no wife. Then one day his sister said to him: "Wanyekí, live with them. There are no other women. They are in the same position as you—there are no men. So go around with them. There is no one else for you to marry. So marry them." Chu had died in the meanwhile, so Wanyekí, who already had had two wives married these three girls, who were much younger than he. This kind of relationship is not difficult for a Kaingáng girl, for far from wishing to retain her hold on the recreations of her childhood she looks forward to the sexual experiences that she has been urged to seek ever since she was a baby in arms.

Wanyekí lived alone with his three wives, his sister's daughters, until

[2] See footnote p. 30.

2: Henry E-5 (1932-1934) 1941
SM3 Caingang SM3
Aweikoma

VII

The Processes of Internal Order

THE EXTENDED FAMILY is the unit of security—outside all is uncertain and deadly. It is this dichotomy that underlies the movements of food and property and the handling of conflicts in Kaingáng society. In all these situations it is not so much that one individual acts over against another as that the entire group cooperates in an effort to keep intact the last shred of security that remains to them in a hostile universe.

Hunting and the Distribution of Food

The Kaingáng inhabit an enormous territory. Through this land they scatter in small groups in search of food, for there is not enough game concentrated in any one area to support a large population. The small hunting bands are made up of men who are related as brothers, as fathers and children, and as in-laws. This is the standard composition of the bands from the Kaingáng point of view. Sometimes men are associated who are first cousins or who have inherited hunting relationships from their fathers. The inheritance of paternal loyalties is very important in Kaingáng society. If two men have been close associates for years, their sons will be close companions by the pure accident of their fathers' association. To the Kaingáng such a relationship has a special warmth because it is a reminder of their parents.

Thus the hunting band, however ephemeral its composition, is made up of individuals who are closely related by consanguineal, affinal, and sentimental ties; and as long as the nightmare of vendetta has never raised barriers between them, the members of the group live without serious conflicts. Their life is not idyllic by any means—they have their quarrels, and sometimes they separate, but there is never any bloodshed. Stability is

2: Henry Σ-5 (1932-1934) 1941
SM3 Caingang SM3
Aweikoma

621 maintained by yielding to the aggressor, by grumbling under one's breath, and, at last, by going away—that is the end of all tension.

624 When a hunter kills an animal he rarely keeps it—even though he has no meat himself, he gives it away to a member of the band. He knows, of course, that he will get a piece of it, but if it is a bird and the recipient's family is large, it may be a very little piece. Under such a system of distribution it would be impossible for anyone to hoard meat even if the Kaingáng knew how to preserve it. It is also of little importance who the best hunter is, for all live by his prowess—his kills are the property of all. Not he, but the man to whom he gives his kill, receives the lion's share—the head of the tapir with its succulent neck. Whoever cuts the tapir takes as large a piece as he wishes, and no one murmurs—within his hearing.

One day, when I understood, at last, that the Kaingáng felt this way about butchering, I saw Vomblé, who had received a delicious young tapir from his brother-in-law, carry off half of it. I was somewhat puzzled because, since I was keeping a minute check on the distribution of pieces of the kill, I thought that Vomblé might divide it somewhere else and I might miss some information. As he stalked off down the river with the head and front legs of the animal on his shoulder, I asked him, "Who's going to get that?" "This is mine," said Vomblé. "All of it?" I asked in amazement. "Well," said he, slightly embarrassed, "I may give some to someone else." He did give a leg to his sister-in-law, but that was all.

Once the butcher has taken the head and whatever other choice morsels he may select, he will cut out large pieces for his in-laws, his brothers and sisters, and his hunting companions—and give the rest to whoever asks for it. Or he may simply let the women carry it back to camp, where it will be divided by someone else. Sometimes the butcher is influenced by the amount of meat he knows to be in the hands of other people. If they have plenty he may give them none at all even though they are close relatives.

Sometimes meat is even appropriated by people who had no hand in its killing, but it is impossible to call this thieving, for thieving can occur only where there are clearly conceived ideas of property rights which are buttressed by strongly felt sanctions. But in Kaingáng culture the whole concept of property is most closely tied up with this desire to keep peace among relatives. One day Waipó and I shot a tapir, but since it was growing late we took only a little of the meat in the expectation of getting the rest the following day; but when we arrived at the scene of the kill the following morning we found that other people had come from an encampment near us and had already got the meat cut up. They had taken it into their heads to divide the animal among themselves, and no one opposed them. Of course, they had not bothered about me any more than they had bothered about anyone else in my camp. I suggested that I should like to have a leg,